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THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING
THE QUESTION OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO MILITARY SERVICE

Written statement submitted by Pax Christi International,
a non-governmental organization in consultative status
(category II)

The Secretary-General has received the following communication which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[4 March 1991]

Pax Christi International welcomes the Secretary-General's report "Conscientious Objection to Military Service". We ask the Commission to:

1. Recognize that conscientious objection to military service derives from reasons of conscience or profound conviction arising from religious, ethical, moral or humanitarian, philosophical or similar motives.
2. Recognize the right of persons already in the armed services to be released on grounds of conscience or profound conviction. Requests for such release are occurring more frequently in countries where obligatory military service has been replaced by a volunteer enlistment programme. The enlisting volunteer may be asked to indicate in writing or otherwise that he or she is not a conscientious objector. However, despite this, young people may find that during military training the probability of their taking human life is so repugnant that they become conscientious objectors. This change of mind and heart should be respected and these young people should be released from the armed forces.
3. Request the Secretary-General to include the right of conscientious objection in the publications and activities of the World Campaign for Human Rights and in other United Nations public information activities.

4. Emphasize that an alternative service should promote justice, peace, economic conversion, sustainable development, environmental preservation and restoration. Such a service should also promote international co-operation and understanding. It must never be punitive or used as a means of punishment.

5. Request the Secretary-General to update and expand the information provided in the annexes of the Sub-Commission's report by Messrs. Eide and Mubango-Chipoya entitled "Conscientious Objection to Military Service" (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1983/30/Rev.1) where the availability of new information on the issue of conscientious objectors requesting release from volunteer armies should be noted in particular.
